

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1-8 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten to comply with § 112, second paragraph, and/or rewritten into independent form.

Claim 1, 9, and 13 are amended to improve their form.

Claim 9 is amended to indicate that there is “a gas-liquid separation membrane is present between said container and said catalyst.” Support for this amendment can be found at, for example, (815) of Fig. 4 of the present specification.

Claim 13 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 14 and claim 14 is canceled.

The specification is amended to recite “the fuel container 811.” Support for this amendment is found at, for example, of Fig. 7, where it is clear that the gas treatment unit 804 is placed at an end position of the upper region of the fuel container 811.

Upon entry of these amendments, which are respectfully requested, claims 1-13 and 15-17 will be pending.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that the IDS filed on January 10, 2007 has been placed in the file, but only references JP 2003-036879 and JP 2003-132931 were considered as to the merits, because copies of the other references were not received from the International Bureau.

Applicants submit herewith an IDS with copies of the references that were not forwarded from the International Bureau for the Examiner's consideration.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Namely, the Examiner asserts that there is insufficient antecedent basis for line 8 of claim 1 to recite “the air.”

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to claim 1 obviate this rejection.

Reconsideration, withdrawal of the § 112 rejection, and allowance of claims 1-8 are respectfully requested.

On pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Okamoto (U.S. Patent 5,714,276) (“Okamoto”) for reasons of record.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment to claim 9 obviates this rejection. For example, present claim 9 recites “a gas-liquid separation membrane is present between said container and said catalyst.” Okamoto does not disclose a gas-liquid separator membrane between the container and the catalyst. See Fig. 1 of Okamoto.

Claims 10-11 depend from claim 9, directly or indirectly.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 9-11 are not anticipated by Okamoto. Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Bruck et al (U.S. Patent Application 2003/0215683) (“Bruck”) for reasons of record.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 13, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Kozu et al (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0265655) ("Kozu") for reasons of record.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendment to claim 13 obviates this rejection, because claim 13 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 14, which was not cited under either rejection and the Examiner had indicated that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 13, either directly or indirectly.

Thus, claims 13, 15, and 16 are not anticipated by Bruck or Kozu.

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 13, 15, and 16 are respectfully requested.

On page 5 of the Office Action, claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Okamoto as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Bruck for reasons of record.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 9 obviates this rejection, because claim 12 depends indirectly from claim 9, and Okamoto does not teach or suggest a gas-liquid separator membrane between the container and the catalyst. Therefore, claim 12 is not rendered obvious by Okamoto. Further, Bruck does not make up for this deficiency.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 obviousness rejection of claim 12 are respectfully requested.

On page 6 of the Office Action, claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kozu as applied to claims 13 and 15 above, and further in view of Bruck for reasons of record.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 13 obviates this rejection, because claim 17 depends from claim 13 and claim 13 has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 14, which was indicated to be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Further, the combination of Kozu and Bruck does not appear to teach all the requirements of present claim 13.

Reconsideration and allowance of claim 17 are respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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